



San Diego County DPLU News

Winter 2010

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IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES FOR ADVANCE PLANNING:

- Jan. 22: Planning Commission:
Density Bonus Ordinance
- Jan. 27 Board of Supervisors:
Zoning & Subdivision
Ordinance Update
- Feb. 19 Planning Commission:
General Plan Update

For more information and additional upcoming meetings, please visit the Calendar on our Web site at: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/index.html.

From the Director

Hello everyone,

Happy 2010! The recession made 2009 a tough year, but that did not stop our department from making great progress. Our proposed General Plan Update held its first public hearing with the Planning Commission. We released our North County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) for public review, unveiled numerous customer service improvements and hired a new assistant director, Rich Haas. As always, we'll be working hard in 2010 to be the best department we can be.

Until next time,

- Eric Gibson, Director, Department of Planning and Land Use

Advance Planning News

General Plan Update

Conservation Subdivision Program Subcommittee

The Planning Commission's new Conservation Subdivision Program subcommittee that was scheduled to meet Jan. 8 was unable to. DPLU will send out an announcement once a new date has been set. The subcommittee will specifically discuss issues concerning Conservation Subdivisions --- which propose to create development in ways to protect open space and other important aspects of community character --- that arose during the General Plan Update hearings held in November and December. Those topics include: minimum lot-size regulations, community character and the role of Community Plans. The subcommittee meetings are open to the public. The subcommittee is comprised of three planning commissioners, Bryan Woods, Adam Day and Michael Beck.

Planning Commission Recommended Use Maps

In the General Plan Update public hearing meetings held in November and December, the Planning Commission and staff used several previously-accepted Land Use Maps to create a new set, the Planning Commission Recommended Maps. Those maps can now be seen on the General Plan Update "What's New" Web page at www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate.

Additional information from the Planning Commission hearing, including links to the presentations made during the hearing, are available in the December special edition of the [DPLU Update](#).



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Richard Haas Joins DPLU Team; Fills Assistant Director Role

Richard Haas, who previously served as the Assistant Director for San Diego County's Department of Environmental Health (DEH), has been hired to become DPLU's new Assistant Director. Haas was Assistant Director of DEH from 1998 through 2005 and was instrumental in helping that department make numerous performance improvements. DPLU Director Eric Gibson said Haas brings an "abundance of experience" in how to measure and improve an organization's performance, budgeting, finance, organizational management and contracts.

"Plus, he already 'knows' the County, so he'll be able to help us immediately," Gibson said.

Most recently, Haas worked in the private sector as the director of business operations for a large energy research and development firm. Haas also was in charge of the City of San Diego's Public Works group from 2005 to 2007, where he helped orchestrate award-winning improvements. He also spent 26 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a Captain in the Civil Engineer Corps where he honed skills in public works, construction and contract administration.

Haas is a registered professional civil engineer in Washington state, a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the California Environmental Health Association. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from UCLA and a Master of Science in construction management from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Welcome, Rich!

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The General Plan Update public hearing that began in November and was continued to Dec. 4 was also continued until Feb. 19, 2010. At the Feb. 19 meeting the Planning Commission will address issues that were not resolved in the previous meetings. A partial list of those issues was published and can be found in the December special edition of the [DPLU Update](#).

Zoning Ordinance Consistency

Advance Planning staff has been studying the Zoning Ordinance to determine where regulations should be revised to make it consistent with the proposed General Plan Update. Staff plans to share its recommended changes with the community planning and sponsor groups within the next month. The General Plan Update remains on schedule to be brought to the Board of Supervisors for consideration this fall.

Policy and Ordinance Development Subdivision Ordinance Update

The Planning Commission recommended approval Dec. 18 of the comprehensive cleanup of the County's Subdivision Ordinance that staff completed late last year. The revised ordinance is expected to be brought to the Board of Supervisors for consideration Jan. 27. The recommended changes were made to make the ordinance easier to read and understand. The ordinance, the revisions and the negative declaration stating the changes won't create any significant environmental effects can be seen on our [Web site](#). (Staff Contact: [Heather Steven](#))

Landscape Ordinance

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Water Conservation in Landscaping Ordinance and endorsed the Landscaping Design Manual on Dec. 9. The ordinance will take effect Feb. 12. The new ordinance is a result of the Board's direction in October 2008 for DPLU to study and recommend ways to improve the County's existing landscape ordinance by increasing water conservation and making homes safer from fire. The water conservation in the new ordinance will be implemented through the Design Manual. People can see the ordinance and the Design Manual on the Advance Planning [Web site](#). (Staff Contact: [Dixie Switzer](#))

Zoning Ordinance Update

The Planning Commission recommended approval of changes to the Zoning Ordinance in December. DPLU is scheduled to bring the recommended changes to the Board of Supervisors for its

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Important Dates in American Planning History:

- 1912: Walter D. Moody's "Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago" is adopted as an 8th-grade textbook on city planning by the Chicago Board of Education — possibly the first formal instruction in city planning below the college level in U.S. history.
- 1917: Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. becomes the first president of the American City Planning Institute, forerunner of the American Institute of Planners and American Institute of Certified Planners. Olmsted was one of the main creators of the "White City" that astounded the world at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago.
- 1925: Cincinnati, Ohio becomes the first major American City to officially endorse a comprehensive plan.

(Source: American Planning Association)

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consideration Jan. 27. The draft of the recommended changes can be seen on the [Advance Planning Web site](#). (Staff Contact: [Heather Steven](#)).

Density Bonus Ordinance

Advance Planning staff is preparing a Zoning Ordinance amendment that will improve the County's Density Bonus provisions in several ways. DPLU is scheduled to bring the proposed changes to the Planning Commission for its consideration Jan. 22. The changes intend to make the ordinance consistent with state requirements; carry out the goals, policies and objectives of the County's housing element; and provide clear guidance on the housing concessions and incentives that qualify for a density bonus. The amendments also include a local Affordable Senior Program that would let the County set a time to end Board Policy 1-79 and revise the General Plan Regional Land Use Element Policy 3.6. The mobile home park density bonus program covered by General Plan Regional Land Use Element Policy 3.8 and Board Policy I-102 are proposed for repeal. The Density Bonus Ordinance can be viewed at the [Policy and Ordinance Development Web site](#). (Staff Contact: [Dixie Switzer](#))

Medical Marijuana

The Board of Supervisors approved and extended a moratorium in September and October 2009 prohibiting the establishment of marijuana dispensaries in the unincorporated county. The 10-month, 15-day moratorium is needed to give Advance Planning's staff time to research, study and propose options to regulate medical marijuana collectives. Staff intends to bring a proposed ordinance back to the Board of Supervisors for its consideration early this year. The interim urgency ordinance can be seen at the [Policy and Ordinance Development Web site](#). (Staff Contact: [Joseph Farace](#))

Renewable Energy Ordinance

Advance Planning staff has started working on amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance which would 1) update existing County regulations pertaining to wind turbine systems and 2) add new provisions related to the siting and permitting of solar energy systems and facilities. The ordinance will be presented to the County Board of Supervisors in 2010. (Staff Contact: [Carl Stiehl](#))

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Important Building Division Telephone Numbers

Building Offices: (858) 694-2960

Toll Free: (800) 411-0017

2003, 2007 Wildfire Survivors:
(858) 694-3876

Online, not In Line

DPLU and the Building Division have created several Web-based tools to help customers by reducing wait times and offering new services people can use without coming to County offices. Here are some of those!

Research building permit and property histories:

<http://landinfo.sdcy.ca.gov/Index.cfm>

Apply for some building permits:

<http://sdcountyuegepay.com/kivanet/citizen/>

Estimate your permit cost:

http://sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/bldgforms_index.html#feest

Find building forms:

www.sdcy.ca.gov/dplu/bldgforms/index.html

Answer zoning questions:

www.sdcy.ca.gov/dplu/docs/444.pdf
www.sdcy.ca.gov/dplu/zoning/index.html

Check average counter wait-times:

www.sdcy.ca.gov/dplu/bldg/bldg_waits.html

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Building Division News

Online Tools to Calculate Parks, Traffic fees

DPLU's Building division is creating new online tools to supplement the building permit fee calculator it introduced last year that will let our customers determine how much their projects may cost --- in particular, how much projects will have to pay in park land and transportation impact fees. Knowing up front what these costs will be, without having to come to County land-use counters or read County ordinances, will give customers a more complete picture of how much their projects may cost even before they submit plans. Knowing those various costs in advance will also let customers navigate the land-use process with more certainty. The division has already added a Web page where customers can determine how much their Park Land Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) fees will be and plans to add a second Web page to determine Transportation Impact Fees (TIF). PLDO fees vary by community and are used by unincorporated communities to buy land and build ball fields and playgrounds. TIF fees vary by community and by how much traffic projects are expected to generate. They intend to ensure that new development helps build and expand the roads new residents will rely upon. People can find the PLDO fee Web Page and the Building Permit Estimator-Calculator under "Online Services" at www.sdcy.ca.gov/dplu

Going Green

In 2009, our Project Planning division took steps to become more environmentally conscious by letting customers submit more plans and applications electronically rather than on paper. This year, the Building division is expanding that effort to "Go Green." For example, San Diego County Planning Commission agenda packets, which often run hundreds of pages, will now be sent electronically, a move that is expected to drastically cut back on paper use. Agendas for many of our community planning advisory groups and design review boards, Zoning Ordinance Updates and other materials will also be sent electronically. The division conservatively estimates that it can reduce its paper consumption by roughly 350,000 pages a year --- the equivalent of nearly 238 copies of Tolstoy's "War and Peace." The shift will not only cut paper use, it will also reduce taxpayer expenses by reducing printing costs.

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Featured Species: Short-leaved Dudleya

If you're out and about in La Jolla, Del Mar, Torrey Pines or maybe even Carmel Mountain, watch your step --- you don't want to trample the short-leaf dudleya, an endangered, tiny succulent that is generally found on dry, sandstone bluffs. The species is not only native to California, it only exists in our state. A member of the Stonecrop family, the plant lives year-around, and forms small, colorful, succulent leaves in a circular-rosette form. Like many other endangered species, its habitat has been diminished by urban development. At one time, the plant could be found along the mesa above La Jolla and Del Mar Heights Road, and it has been found in the past in Torrey Pines (it is protected in Torrey Pines State Reserve), the south side of McGonigle Canyon, the mesa east of Del Mar, Crest Canyon and Carmel Mountain. But today it is generally only found in a 2 ½ mile wide, 7-mile long stretch between La Jolla and Del Mar and is known from fewer than five occurrences.

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Multiple Species Conservation Program

South County Plan

San Diego County's Department of Parks and Recreation plans to apply in January 2010 for grants from TransNet — the voter-approved half-cent sales tax — to benefit the South County Plan. Grant money would be used to restore cactus wren habitat and aid fire recovery projects in South County Plan preserves. The South County Plan was approved by County Supervisors in 1997 and received its federal and state permits in 1998 to help protect habitat for 85 threatened species. Since then, the County has continued to acquire and monitor land for the plan. Through 2008, the ambitious 50-year plan had already set aside 66,000 acres of sensitive habitat, with another 12,000 acres that could be preserved into the program when development occurs, in just 11 years. The combined 78,000 acres represents nearly 80 percent of the plan's original 98,379-acre goal. For more information about the South County Plan, please see the 2009 MSCP Annual Report online at www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp.

North County Plan

The North County Plan is poised to take another big step forward in early 2010. That's when DPLU plans to release the revised North County Plan, its draft environmental impact report and its draft environmental impact statement for public review. DPLU released the preliminary draft North County Plan for a 45-day public comment period in February 2009. Comments from that public review period are being used to create the revised plan. The current draft plan, its appendices and the public comments submitted last year can be seen and/or downloaded at: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/nc.html.

People can also see how their properties may fit within the North County Plan by using an interactive mapping tool we created, which can be found at:

<http://gis.co.san-diego.ca.us/imf/sites/mscp>.

East County Plan

Work on the East County Plan has been slowed indefinitely because of County budget constraints and staffing reductions resulting from the continuing economic recession. Once the budget and staffing constraints are resolved, development is intended to resume.

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Did You Know?

That the San Diego region is recognized as one of the most biologically important in the U.S.?

The diversity of species found in the San Diego region is attributed mainly to the wide variety of vegetation and habitats associated with the region's range of micro-climates, topography, soils and other natural features. From the coast to its deserts, mountains and forests, the San Diego region is a biological cornucopia. The unincorporated lands make up the largest geographical portion of San Diego County. Its natural features include lagoons, foothills, mountain ranges and desert and supports more than 400 sensitive plants and animals. This diversity is part of the San Diego region's unique natural heritage and a legacy for future generations.

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Multiple Species Conservation Program

For now, we will continue to notify interested people about the status of the East County Plan as news breaks.

To find more information about the East County Plan and to see the preliminary draft preserve map, please go to:
www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp.

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly / Amending the South County Plan

The MSCP group has completed a draft financing plan as part of its efforts to improve its South County Plan to help preserve the endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly. The butterfly was put on the federal endangered species list in 1997. Experts believe the butterfly's populations have decreased by up to 95 percent. In the summer of 2009, the County worked with state and federal wildlife agencies to better identify the places where the butterfly has been seen during surveys, including in 2009. The County also submitted an Adaptive Management and Monitoring Strategy paper and a Conservation Policy paper to interested agencies, biologists, consultants, developers and land owners last summer. Among other things, those papers propose conservation levels, outline how the County could estimate and monitor butterfly populations and manage butterfly habitat, and recommend how the County and developers could set aside and protect butterfly habitat when building occurs.

For more information about the Quino amendment, please go to:
www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/mscp/quino.html.

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Project Planning

About Project Planning:

Project Planning is the division of the Department of Planning and Land Use that reviews and processes "discretionary" projects. Those are projects that builders and homeowners cannot do "by right," but which must meet certain conditions and require the approval of the County's land-use decision makers, in some cases DPLU's director, in others, the San Diego County Planning Commission, and others, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. Examples of discretionary projects include lot splits, major subdivisions, and conditionally-permitted uses. We also process applicants' requests for General Plan Amendments and zoning changes.

Important Project Planning Links:

- [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\) Flow Chart](#)
- [Conditions of Approval Manual](#)
- [Developer Deposits](#)
- [Discretionary Permits and Application Forms](#)
- [Environmental Impact Report Guidelines](#)
- [Fee Schedule](#)
- [How Much Discretionary Permits Cost; How Much Time they Take](#)
- [Project Issue Resolution](#)

Cutting Customer Costs, Boosting Productivity

Beginning this week, DPLU's Project Planning Division is introducing a new customer service policy that will cut costs for all our customers. It will focus our staff members' attention on active cases and allow customers who aren't working on their projects to go into "idle" status. Last year, a DPLU review revealed that more than one-third of the 750 projects the department was processing were for all intents and purposes "inactive" --- meaning that customers, for whatever reason, had not submitted new information to the County for at least a year.

Without any mechanism for customers and the County to officially acknowledge those projects as "inactive" or "idle," the County had to assume that customers were actively pursuing them and continue to work on them, even if it was just ongoing administrative work. That raised costs for all our customers. We had to continue to charge "inactive" customers for our work. At the same time, DPLU staff members were diverted from working on "active" projects, which lengthened the time and cost it took to process them. The new policy will fix this problem. Starting this week, projects that haven't submitted required information for at least 12 months, or whose financial accounts have been in deficit for at least three months, will go into idle status --- and County staff will be able to focus their attention on "active" projects. The public can get more information about the policy at:

www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/907.pdf

Roll Call for County Consultants

DPLU is reestablishing its list of approved archaeologists, biologists, environmental impact report preparers, historians, traffic and transportation experts and is seeking applications by Feb. 5. The department provides lists of those consultants and eight other consultant types for customers to choose from when their projects require environmental study. Every four years, DPLU "re-establishes" a number of those consultant lists --- by requiring consultants to re-apply --- to make sure the lists are up to date. Consultants can get additional information about the application process by clicking [here](#). The public can see the consultants lists at Project Planning's Web page, at: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/Project_Planning_page.html.

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Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement

By the Numbers:

Complaints Responded to: 587 (Oct.-Dec.)

Did You Know:

- That County Code Enforcement Officers respond to nearly 3,000 complaints (all within 24 hours) in a typical fiscal year.

Tearing Down a Public Nuisance

San Diego County's Code Enforcement group and Building Division helped speed up the process of razing a pair of abandoned buildings on a vacant property in the unincorporated area near Escondido in late December.

The buildings garnered media attention after the mother of an Escondido teen who was tragically killed in a DUI accident after leaving the property said her son and other teens routinely used the buildings to drink and conduct "rave" parties.

The County's Code Enforcement group had no record of complaints about the property but was notified by the Sheriff's Department at 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 17. They immediately sent enforcement officers to the site Friday morning and had posted the buildings for abatement and notified the owners before the end of the day. Meanwhile, the Building Division personally contacted the property owner and quickly issued them a demolition permit by 10 o'clock in the morning on Monday, Dec. 21.

In all, it took crews six days to demolish the buildings, remove two abandoned vehicles, car parts, and trash ranging from lawn furniture, liquor bottles, clothing, bedding and construction debris. Photos of the cleanup can be seen [here](#):

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